WE CLAIM:

1.   A method of monitoring and managing student activities in an online educational course, the method comprising:

maintaining a database of students and instructors, the database of students and instructors comprising student identification information, instructor identification information, and course identification information;

automatically recording student access to each of a plurality of online education resources and tasks related to the online education course;

receiving a query from an instructor for information regarding at least one student in the online education course; and

presenting a plurality of interactive student management tool selections in a graphical user interface to the instructor.

2.   The method of claim 1, wherein the database further comprises student information for all students in a course section of the online education course and wherein the method further comprises receiving a query from the instructor for information regarding all students in the course section.

3.   The method of claim 1, comprising presenting a student interaction chart to the instructor upon receipt of a student interaction query from the instructor, wherein the student interaction chart comprises a list of students in a course section and data on a number of message postings for each student in the course section.

4.   The method of claim 1, wherein presenting a plurality of interactive student management tool sections further comprises presenting a student inactivity status link and displaying a student inactivity status list in response to an instructor query, the student inactivity status list comprising data on students who have not accessed the online educational course for longer than a predetermined time.

5.   The method of claim 4, further comprising displaying an automatic email template link for each of the students on the student inactivity status list, whereby an instructor may contact a particular student on the student inactivity status list.

6.   The method of claim 1, wherein one of the plurality of student management tool selections comprises a class information link, and wherein the method further comprises retrieving student information for students associated with the instructor in response to a query from the instructor.

7.   The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of student management tool selections comprises a section performance tool selection and wherein the method further comprises retrieving student assignment performance information for all students associated with the instructor and displaying a graphical comparison chart representing homework performance for all students.

8.   The method of claim 1 wherein automatically recording student access comprises recording the date of each student access to course materials, the course materials comprising course homework assignments and online discussion groups, and wherein the method further comprises retrieving the student access information relating to access of course materials and displaying a graphical representation of a number of student access attempts for the section of students associated with the instructor over a desired period of time for each of the course materials accessed.

9.   The method of claim 8, further comprising presenting the instructor with an individual student selection menu configured to retrieve and display course activity for a selected student in the section of students.

10.   The method of claim 1, wherein automatically recording student access comprises, recording access to, and authorship of a posting to, an

online discussion for a course and recording authorship of any previous posting that the posting relate to, and wherein the method further comprises retrieving the student access information relating to the online discussion for the course and displaying a graphical representation of which students in the

5   section authored postings in response to postings by other students in the section.

Sub.a!>   11.   A method of monitoring and managing student activities in an online educational course, the method comprising:

10   receiving a completed student assignment in electronic form;

associating the completed student assignment with an instructor and storing the completed student assignment in a database;

generating a grade book for the instructor displaying grade information for each of a plurality of students in a course section taught by the instructor,

15   wherein the grade book comprises student identification information, grade information for any graded student assignment, and an automated link to any completed student assignment that is ungraded.

12.   The method of claim 11, wherein generating a grade book

20   further comprises displaying a visual time indicator for each completed student assignment that is ungraded, wherein the graphical visual time indicator represents an elapsed time from a time each ungraded completed student assignment was received.

25   *Sub. a2>* 13.   The method of claim 12, wherein displaying a visual indicator further comprises increasing a size of the visual indicator as the elapsed time increases.

3 14.   The method of claim 11, wherein generating a grade book for an

30   instructor comprising displaying the grade information in graphical format, wherein one of a predetermined set of graphical elements, each of the

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graphical elements representing a particular student performance level, is displayed for each graded student assignment.

15. The method of claim 14, further comprising displaying student activity completion indicia adjacent the graphical elements representing student performance level for graded assignments.

16. The method of claim 11, further comprising presenting an instructor with an assignment grading template in response to receipt of a request via the automated link to an ungraded completed student assignment for a particular student, the assignment grading template providing an automated link to any previously graded student assignment for the particular student, the assignment grading template further comprising an instructor comment section configured to receive instructor comments regarding the completed student assignment.

17. A method of monitoring and managing student activities in an online educational course, the method comprising:

maintaining a discussion thread comprising an online bulletin board of messages posted by students and instructors regarding course topics in the online educational course;

receiving a request from an instructor to view messages posted to the discussion thread; and

generating a message rating tool for the instructor comprising a message display listing discussion thread messages from each student in a course section run by the instructor and a message rating mechanism configured to attach an instructor selected rating to a message in the message display.

18. The method of claim 17 further comprising sorting messages for each student by the instructor selected rating whereby an instructor views a prioritized list of student messages posted to the discussion thread.

19. A method of monitoring and managing student activities in an online educational course, the method comprising:

an online educational course instructor accessing an online message rating tool;

retrieving a discussion thread comprising an online bulletin board of messages posted by students and instructors regarding course topics in the online educational course;

viewing discussion thread messages from each student in a course section run by the instructor with the online message rating tool;

applying a rating with a message rating mechanism configured to attach an instructor selected rating to a message.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein applying a rating comprises selecting a predetermined rating with the online message rating tool.

21. A system managing and monitoring online student activity in an online educational course comprising:

a computer in communication a computer network;

a database containing student online course activity information for students in an online educational course; and

an instructor tool accessible by an instructor using the computer via the computer network to:

generate a plurality of interactive student management tool selections in a graphical user interface to the instructor, wherein at least one of the student management tool selections is operative to display the student online course activity to the instructor for at least one student in a course section taught by the instructor.

22. A method of monitoring and managing student and faculty activities in an online educational course, the method comprising:

maintaining a database of students and faculty members, the database of students and faculty members comprising student identification information, faculty member identification information, and course identification information;

5   recording student access to each of a plurality of online education resources and tasks related to the online education course;

linking all student data for each student in an online educational course section with each faculty member teaching the online educational course section;

10   recording assignment turnaround time to review student assignments for each faculty member;

receiving a query from an authorized user for information regarding at least one faculty member in the online education course; and

presenting a plurality of faculty data for the faculty member to the
15   authorized user in a graphical user interface.

23.   The method of claim 22, wherein receiving a plurality of interactive faculty data comprises receiving faculty history data for the faculty member, the faculty history data comprising data on courses taught by the
20   faculty member and data on faculty performance in courses taught by the faculty member.

24.   The method of claim 23, wherein the data on faculty performance comprises data on complaints received from students taking a
25   course from the faculty member.

25.   The method of claim 23, wherein the data on faculty performance comprises assignment turnaround time for student assignments graded by the instructor.

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26.   The method of claim 22, wherein presenting a plurality of faculty data comprises presenting a message link to the authorized user, the method

further comprising selecting the message link, receiving a pre-addressed message template to the faculty member, and sending a message to the faculty member.

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